

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am signing Senate Bill 387, a bill that allows the city of Calexico to encase the New River in an effort to protect human health and the environment.

The New River is an international waterway whose headwaters are in Northern Mexico near the city of Mexicali. The river flows over the international border, into California, through the City of Calexico's urban core, draining into the Salton Sea. For decades the New River has been identified as one of the most polluted rivers in the United States.

The United States and Mexican Governments have been cautiously developing a plan to address the challenges with this river. Progress has been made on studies designed to address the pollution challenges facing the river including international cooperation to improve sewage treatment facilities in Mexico. In February, the State Water Resources Control Board initiated a pilot project as part of the Cal EPA Environmental Justice Action Plan. The pilot project will have the State Water Resources Control Board work with the Calexico New River Committee and various stakeholders to review health data on the pollutants in the river, inventory precautionary approaches, and develop an environmental risk reduction plan for the Imperial Valley that could be replicated elsewhere.

This bill and other actions occurring on the federal and international levels, will further the serious pollution challenges with the New River and its communities. But more needs to be accomplished. The various governments need to coordinate and develop a plan that recognizes the seriousness of the pollution challenges facing this river and addresses its human health and environmental impacts. As the Governor of a state that borders Mexico, I pledge to make this issue a priority as my fellow Governors and I develop action plans for increasing cross border relations and addressing the many opportunities facing border states.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger